REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 7 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-4 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.§103(a) as unpatentable over Asai (U.S. 5,402,414) in view of the admitted prior art. The Examiner admits Asai reference fails to disclose a plurality of ring networks and directing which ring network should form a group of sharing orderwire functions. The Examiner points to the admitted prior art, page 4:18 – 5:3 to show such a function in Fig. 14.

The Examiner states that the admitted prior art disclosures a junction node 100 coupling ring A with B, and that both rings share orderwire functions at junction node 100 The Related Art sections shows a network structure with two rings connected at a junction node. However, as set forth in the applicant's description following on page 5 at line 3 a problem with the prior art is that the mixer unit does not support mixing of orderwire signals supplied from a plurality of ring networks and the node NE 100 must choose either ring A or ring B.

Applicant's specification clearly discloses that the NE 100 at the junction point lacks flexibility in the orderwire communication between different rings, and that the propagation of orderwire signals are confined within a single ring; there is no connectivity between the ring A and ring B (see page 7, lines 4-8). This is different from applicant's invention as claimed because according to claim 1 the ring networks form a group for sharing orderwire functions.

In the AAPA one of the problems regarding two ring networks described is that the orderwire functions cannot be shared between the ring networks.

Therefore it is respectfully submitted that the AAPA does not suggest two ring networks sharing orderwire functions and the rejection should be withdrawn.

It should be further noted that apparently the Office Action has regarded the Asai's node Sa as a junction node. However, applicant's clams 1 and 7 define "junction node" as a node "at which a plurality of ring networks meet." Since the system of Asai has only one ring network, there cannot be, by definition, a junction node in that system. Even if a conventional junction node 100 of Fig. 14 described in AAPA were replaced with the node SA shown in Fig. 7 of Asai, the two rings A and B would not be able to share their orderwire channels, let alone to provide a flexible combination of them as shown in Fig. 1 of the present invention.

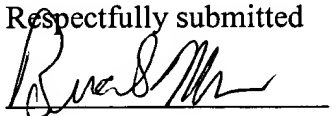
In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 1-4 and 7 as amended in applicant's amended filed February 25, 2004 are patentably distinguishable over the combination of Asai with AAPA.

Reconsideration of the present application and allowance of the pending claims is most respectfully solicited.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully respected. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted



Brian S. Myers
Reg. No. 46,947

CUSTOMER NUMBER 026304
Telephone: (212) 940-8703
Fax: (212) 940-8986/8987
Docket No.: FUJR 17.570 (100794-11487)
BSM: rm